UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
63rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 28 March 1990
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 63rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAHER (Canada)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision contained in document A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development)

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A/C.5/44/SR.63
16 April 1990
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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Vaher (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision contained in document A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (A/44/48, A/C.5/44/54)

1. Mr. STRONG (Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) said that the Preparatory Committee felt that the meetings to be held at the headquarters of the regional commissions were of particular importance because they would afford an opportunity for considering the various agenda items from a regional perspective and ensuring that the concerns of each region were taken into consideration.

2. With regard to the Conference secretariat, he recalled that the General Assembly had decided that the ad hoc secretariat would have its headquarters at Geneva and have units in New York and Nairobi. Those units would have a dual role: they would deal both with substantive issues and serve as a liaison with United Nations bodies and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

3. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the chief body dealing with environmental questions, and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), both of which had headquarters at Nairobi, must contribute fully to Conference preparations. There were in fact many agenda items which fell entirely within their mandates. The Conference would not be a substitute for their work, but would provide them with political support that would allow them to accelerate the processes they had initiated, achieve their objectives more quickly and broaden their scope. The Nairobi unit would also serve as a liaison between those bodies and the Conference secretariat so that work could proceed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Preparatory Committee, which meant the specialists assigned to the Conference secretariat would be in constant contact with those at UNEP and the Centre for Human Settlements.

4. The New York unit would also have an important role to play, given that New York was the system's focal point. The Conference secretariat would be called upon to work closely with the various services of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the permanent missions in all matters having to do with, inter alia, the relationship between environment and development, the transfer of technology and the transfer of resources, three areas which the Preparatory Committee considered essential. Proximity to Washington, D.C. would make it possible to establish useful contacts with other organizations and the private sector.

(Mr. Strong)

5. The establishment of close ties between the ad hoc secretariat and the two units was fundamental, since the contributions of each of the three centres must be immediately made available to the two other bodies concerned. To do that, the Conference secretariat must be given a certain amount of leeway in organizing its work and be provided with the necessary electronic communications facilities.

6. In response to a comment by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and other questions relating to staffing and the ratio of General Service to Professional staff, he said that the Conference was concerned with a highly specialized field and that the secretariat ought to include highly qualified personnel who could work with specialists from the various agencies who would participate in the Conference. Contributions from those agencies would have to be received, studied and adapted to Conference objectives; that would require the services not only of environmental specialists, but of specialists in development and experts on each agenda item, who would be better equipped to conduct negotiations at the international level. All that called for highly specialized skills, which explained why the number of senior staff was high in comparison with the number of Professionals. Moreover, teams of senior officials from the various organizations concerned would have to meet with the Conference secretariat staff; consequently, there must be enough General Service staff to service those meetings. It should be recalled, however, that those expenditures were for an ad hoc nature and limited to the preparations for and holding of the Conference.

7. As to whether it would be possible to rely more heavily on staff members than on consultants, he said it was difficult, in view of the need not to disrupt ongoing activities, to have staff released from their duties and transferred to the Conference secretariat. The specialized agencies he had contacted for that purpose would agree to provide specialists only if the United Nations underwrote their expenses. The funds earmarked for the recruitment of consultants had been calculated on the basis of four man-months for each agenda item. If, as feared, they proved to be insufficient, he would endeavour to secure extrabudgetary funds.

8. In conclusion, he reaffirmed that, in its work, the Conference secretariat would continue to respect the General Assembly's guidelines fully.

9. Mr. HALBWACHS (Programme Planning and Budget Division), replying to a question raised by the representative of Uganda, said that as far as the regional meetings were concerned, a distinction must be made between two types of costs: conference-servicing costs, which would be met with the help of existing appropriations under section 29 of the programme budget, and costs incurred for consultant services and the renting of facilities at Bangkok and Santiago, given that the available conference facilities at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean were either inadequate or under renovation. In addition, while there would be no regional meeting for Europe, strictly speaking, the meeting to be held at Bergen would serve in its stead, and $20,000 had been earmarked for that purpose.

(Mr. Halbwachs)

10. Pursuant to decisions taken by the General Assembly, the Conference could be held away from Geneva provided that the host Government, i.e. the Brazilian Government, assumed all additional expenses that would arise. The Secretariat would endeavour to identify those costs together with the Brazilian Government.

11. Replying to a question raised by the representative of Brazil, he said that, although the legal working group had not yet been established, the Secretariat was operating on the assumption that it would hold two sessions at Geneva lasting five working days in order to give the Committee as exact an estimate of expenditures as possible.

12. Mr. NASSER (Egypt) said it was extremely important that the General Assembly should take a close look at its forty-fifth session at the situation of the contingency fund in order to ensure that the fund was able to meet the Organization's needs. He also wondered why, if senior posts were necessary at Geneva - and they were - to ensure smooth inter-agency co-ordination, similar provisions had not been made for the New York and Nairobi units. He also sought confirmation that the regional meetings would in fact be held at the headquarters of the regional commissions and, that being the case, an explanation of the appropriations requested in paragraph 16 of document A/C.5/44/54.

13. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) first sought reassurances that the appropriations requested thus far for the regional meetings, figures for which were contained in the annex to document A/C.5/44/54, would be sufficient to allow those meetings to be held. With regard to the anticipated staffing of the secretariat at Geneva and the two units, the Secretary-General must review the proposals contained in paragraph 7 with a view to formulating recommendations for the equitable division of resources among the three units, bearing in mind the tasks of each one. In view of their political and technical significance, the New York and Nairobi units fully deserved to have posts at a higher level than that currently proposed. It was also to be hoped that the Secretary-General would take the need for equitable geographic distribution into account when filling those posts. Finally, the Secretary-General must look for ways of offsetting some of the anticipated costs through savings in other areas, particularly by minimizing staff travel expenses.

14. Mrs. BERENGUER (Brazil) commended the Secretary-General of the Conference for his view of the role to be played by New York, particularly where substantive issues were concerned and stressed that New York must be kept informed of the activities carried out at Geneva and Nairobi. With regard to the legal working group, she still did not see how the Fifth Committee could authorize the Secretary-General to incur obligations for that activity, on which the Preparatory Committee had yet to take a decision, and she wished to have additional information on the subject.

15. Having received no response to her questions on public information, she once again pointed out that paragraph 17 placed too much emphasis on the environment to the exclusion of anything else, and that activities in that area should be consistent with the decisions taken by the Preparatory Committee. As for the

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(Mrs. Berenguer, Brazil)

resources earmarked for information activities, she wondered why it had been decided, without the agreement of the Preparatory Committee and contrary to the estimates given at the organizational session of that body, that two thirds of the appropriations requested would be used during the biennium 1990-1991 and only one third in 1992, the year of the Conference.

16. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) said that the question of funding was extremely delicate, since the Conference could not be financed entirely from the contingency fund without affecting the regular activities of the Organization; given the importance of the Conference, there was no question of achieving any savings in the sense of General Assembly resolution 41/213. He proposed that the Committee should take the Advisory Committee's proposals as a basis for developing some sort of a guideline: attention would be drawn to the precarious situation of the contingency fund and its inadequacy vis-à-vis the growing needs of the Organization, and the States participating in the Conference would be called upon to make additional voluntary contributions so that the Secretary-General could draw up a revised statement of programme budget implications by the end of 1990 and the General Assembly could make the necessary appropriations for 1991 and 1992.

17. With regard to the regional meetings, he wished to have it confirmed that the meetings planned for African countries would be held at the headquarters of the regional commission - Addis Ababa. He emphasized also the need for the New York and Nairobi units to have another dimension beyond a technical dimension. Finally, with regard to the public information programme, whose importance he acknowledged, he wondered whether all the proposed elements were indispensable and whether a the appropriations requested under that heading could not be significantly reduced.

18. Mr. DANKWA (Ghana) said that the subtle distinction made between redeploying resources and redeploying posts should not lead the Committee to modify its conclusions. He continued to favour a revision of programme budget implications, but nevertheless pointed out that what was most important was to get things in motion. Since a consensus had to be reached, he agreed to let the Advisory Committee carry out that revision and decide what appropriations should be made. Finally, he wished to have it made clear that the Committee's decision should in no way be seen as an attempt to establish a permanent secretariat at Geneva.

19. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller) confirmed that the four regional meetings would all be held at the respective commission headquarters. While the meetings could be held in existing facilities at Addis Ababa and Baghdad, facilities would have to be rented at Bangkok and Santiago (because of construction taking place in the former and a lack of space in the latter), a fact which explained the costs indicated in paragraph 16 of the statement of implications.

20. Replying to the representative of Uganda, he said that the amounts shown in paragraph 15 were sufficient to cover the cost of scheduled activities, which did not mean that other needs might arise. He recalled that General Assembly resolution 44/228 attached great importance to voluntary contributions and that the Secretariat was always trying to achieve maximum efficiency and savings.

(Mr. Gomez)

21. Like the representative of Egypt, he was aware of the need to monitor the situation of the contingency fund closely. Some $2 million had already been withdrawn from the fund. If the Committee followed the Advisory Committee's proposal, no further withdrawals would be made before the end of 1990, i.e. before the Secretary-General submitted his consolidated statement of programme budget implications.

22. With regard to the redeployment of resources and the distinction made in that regard, there was no question at present of adding posts to the existing staffing tables, and proposals that would draw further on existing resources or involve reallocations thereof must be given careful consideration. The Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretariat should submit a report to the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly indicating the resources utilized in 1990 and resources budgeted for 1991 and 1992 seemed extremely prudent. It would then be possible to determine whether the human resources seconded to the ad hoc secretariat had been adequate or not.

23. The Secretariat had planned for the legal working group to hold two sessions in 1991 at Geneva. The Secretariat was well aware that the Preparatory Committee had not yet taken a decision on the subject, but, basing itself on the position stated by that Committee in plenary meeting and the requests made on numerous occasions by the Fifth Committee, it was endeavouring to make forecasts that were as clear and complete as possible. The meetings of the group would not require any additional appropriations: all that was needed at present was authorization for the Secretariat to incur the obligations arising from the Preparatory Committee's decision. In the report that he would submit in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendations, the Secretary-General would take the Preparatory Committee's decision into account.

24. With regard to the public information programme, he wished to assure the Committee that the relationship between environment and development would be duly stressed. Costing of public information activities had been carried out in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference and all the services concerned, following standard procedures. The Secretary-General of the Conference would ensure that the activities of the Department of Public Information closely followed the guidelines from intergovernmental agencies.

25. Mr. HALBWACHS (Programme Planning and Budget Division), answering the representative of Brazil, said that the initial breakdown of funds earmarked for the Department of Public Information during different bienniums constituted only an approximation. The breakdown shown in the statement of implications had ultimately been considered preferable for reasons of organization. For example, all costs relating to the production and dissemination of the brochure to be published prior to the Conference had been included in the 1991 budget, but the brochure would also be distributed in 1992. There would thus be a "carry-over effect" for a certain number of outputs. The Department of Public Information had no intention of slackening its efforts in 1992.

26. Mr. STRONG (Secretary-General of the Conference) said that the public information programme would of course emphasize the correlation between development and the environment, as would all other activities relating to the Conference. The ad hoc secretariat would pay strict attention to the guidelines set out by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/228, as well as to those of the Preparatory Committee. As to the timetable for public information activities, it was true that a considerable portion of the production costs of anticipated outputs would be incurred very early on. However, from the point of view of the public, such activities would be far more important when it came time to mobilize the attention of the media, i.e. in the last few months before the Conference.

27. Mr. PINZON (Colombia) said he was completely satisfied with the explanations given by the Secretary-General of the Conference, who should be given all the latitude he needed to ensure that the ad hoc secretariat functioned effectively.

28. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by some speakers regarding the general thrust of the public information programme and fully anticipated that it would be modified to highlight the correlation between the environment and development, as the Secretary-General of the Conference had assured the Committee it would. With regard to legal matters, it was pointless to resume a substantive debate on a question that had already been considered by the Preparatory Committee, pa.ticularly since the Secretariat had given a satisfactory answer on that subject.

29. The CHAIRMAN observed that all delegations were in agreement on the principle to convene a conference in 1992 and that they also agreed to the procedures set out in General Assembly resolution 44/228 and the timetable for preparatory activities. All delegations seemed to endorse the proposals made by the Preparatory Committee in its report (A/44/48), particularly the draft decision contained in paragraph 55. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee were generally supported. Delegations also seemed to recognize that voluntary contributions must be encouraged. At the same time, the statement of the draft decision's programme budget implications had elicited a number of reservations, and some delegations had even asked to have it revised.

30. In the light of all those factors, he suggested a three-part decision. Firstly, the Committee should tell the General Assembly what costs the adoption of the draft decision in paragraph 55 of document A/44/48 would entail. Secondly, in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, it should recommend that the General Assembly should authorize the Secretary-General to incur obligations pending its forty-fifth session, at which the Assembly would make the appropriations that might be necessary. It would rely for that purpose on a report in which the Secretary-General would clarify various matters: actual and projected requirements, resources to be made available to the secretariat, composition of the staffing table and retention or dissolution of the secretariat. The current procedures did not provide for revised statements of financial implications, but the report would take their place and would reflect specifically the decisions that might be taken by the Preparatory Committee in July 1990. Thirdly, the Committee would invite the Secretary-General actively to solicit voluntary contributions to finance the costs of the Conference.

31. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) noted that one of the most important aspects had not been mentioned, namely, the fact that the use of the contingency fund would undermine the Organization's normal activities. He also did not question the cost evaluation made by the Secretariat.

32. The CHAIRMAN said he assumed that that question, which was of very general interest, would be dealt with by the General Assembly when it examined the report on the implementation of the programme budget and the use of the contingency fund.

33. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) said he had no major objection to the procedure suggested by the Chairman. He simply wished to include in the decision the question of the redeployment of human resources between the three units of the secretariat. He also did not understand why the Chairman intended to replace the revised statement of the programme budget implications.

34. Mr. ELGHOUAYEL (Tunisia) recalled that paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 44/228 (section II) stated explicitly that the financing of the preparatory process and of the Conference itself should not adversely affect other ongoing activities. In his view the Committee should pay due attention to that paragraph, in the light of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

35. Mr. GUPTA (India) said he hoped that the decision envisaged by the President included re-examination of the proposed staffing of the three units comprising the ad hoc secretariat. For greater clarity it would be useful to transmit the proposed text to delegations in writing.

36. The CHAIRMAN said that the text of the final decision would be more substantial. At the current stage he simply wanted assurance that the step he had suggested met with general agreement.

37. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller) said that the statement of programme budget implications had been established in accordance with the budgetary procedure and operating methods of the contingency fund, which was an integral part of the regular budget. The appropriations required for funding the Conference and its preparatory process would be made in December 1990, taking into account the possibilities of redeployment and the obligation not to affect ongoing activities adversely. The Fifth Committee would then have before it a detailed report which would take into account its observations and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and which would constitute in a way the revised statement of financial implications requested by some delegations. The document would be included in the consolidated statement that the Secretary-General would submit to the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions governing the operation of the Reserve Fund.

38. Mrs. BERENGUER (Brazil), referring to the third part of the draft decision suggested by the Chairman, said that she was concerned about the possible consequences of establishing a second voluntary fund in addition to the one established by the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of section II of General Assembly resolution 44/228. The Preparatory Committee had not felt it useful to

(Mrs. Berenguer, Brazil)

establish that second fund. She would like the matter to be reviewed by the Preparatory Committee at its next session and by the Fifth Committee at its forty-fifth session.

39. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller) said that the voluntary fund referred to in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 44/228 (section II) had already been established. As in the case of all trust funds, the Secretary-General would report on its use to the Preparatory Committee and to the General Assembly. That being the case, nothing stood in the way of setting up another voluntary fund to support the goals of the Conference. The Secretary-General was authorized to accept that kind of contribution.

40. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) agreed that the Committee did not have to give the Secretary-General specific authorization to accept voluntary contributions. The problem was one of the correlation between extrabudgetary resources and provision made in the regular budget. As it had done on other occasions, specifically in connection with the financing of the Integrated Management System, the Committee could decide that voluntary contributions should replace budgetary appropriations.

41. Concerning the implications the use of the contingency fund might have for the financing of regular activities, he said that the problem was dealt with by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 17 of its report and that no delegation had raised any objection to the remarks made in that connection by the Advisory Committee's Chairman. He proposed that the Fifth Committee should specify in a preamble that it had taken its decision after examining the programme budget implications and the report of the Advisory Committee and that it endorsed the latter's recommendations.

42. Ms. MUSTONEN (Finland) shared the concerns of the Brazilian delegation in respect of voluntary contributions. The text proposed by the Chairman departed from the draft decision submitted to the Committee and it was not altogether faithful to the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/228. She proposed that the words "seek actively" should be replaced by the words "welcomes the efforts by the Secretary-General ...".

43. The CHAIRMAN said it was his understanding that the objections raised related to the form rather than to the substance of the third part of his proposal. He read out the first part of his draft decision, which he submitted to the Committee for adoption.

44. Mr. VISLYKH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), reaffirming the doubts already expressed by his own delegation and by that of Ghana, proposed that the decision should mention that the acceptance by the United Nations of the Swiss voluntary contribution in the form of free office accommodation should not be construed as its intention to establish in Geneva a permanent Secretariat unit dealing with environmental issues.

45. The CHAIRMAN suggested adding a fourth part to the decision to reflect the Soviet proposal.

46. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) felt that it would be very useful for delegations to have the entire decision before deciding on it.

47. Mr. GUPTA (India) supported the Ugandan proposal.

48. The CHAIRMAN said that he would submit his proposal in writing so that the delegations could decide on it in full knowledge of the facts at the 64th meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
64th meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 March 1989
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 64th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAHER (Canada)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision in A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (continued)

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16 April 1990
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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Vaher (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision in A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Fifth Committee that he had prepared a revised text of the proposal which the Committee was to submit to the General Assembly concerning the programme budget implications of the draft decision in paragraph 55 of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/44/48). Since some delegations still wished to make proposals concerning that text, he suggested that informal talks should be held with a view to producing a text on which delegations could reach a consensus.

2. Mr. INOMATA (Japan), supported by Miss SHITAKHA (Kenya), said that the text drafted by the Chairman was based on contacts with a limited number of delegations, not with all delegations. All delegations should be given an opportunity to discuss the final text of the draft decision to be submitted to the General Assembly.

3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the meeting should be suspended so that informal talks could be held to enable all delegations to participate in drafting the final text of the proposal to be submitted to the General Assembly concerning the programme budget implications of holding the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

The meeting was suspended at 11.10 a.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that he had prepared a revised text of the draft decision to be submitted by the Fifth Committee to the General Assembly. He felt that the new text could receive the support of all delegations, but that it would be advisable to hold an informal meeting of the Fifth Committee, since that would make it easier to resolve any difficulties that might arise in connection with that text.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

FIFTH COMMITTEE
65th meeting
held on
Thursday, 29 March 1990
at 6 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 65th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAHER (Canada)
(Vice-Chairman)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision in document A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (continued)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Vaher (Canada), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 6.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 123: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991 (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft decision in document A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) (continued) (A/44/48, A/C.5/44/54)

1. The CHAIRMAN read out draft decisions I, II and III*, agreed to in the informal consultations, and suggested that the Committee should adopt them, subject to the understanding that, as the representative of the Secretariat had indicated in his statement, the report referred to in decision II would be submitted to the General Assembly early in the forty-fifth session, well in advance of the time when the Assembly would take decisions on the appropriations in question. Furthermore, that report would include a clear indication of the actual use of resources up to the time of its preparation.

2. It was so decided.

3. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at the 63rd meeting, the representative of the Soviet Union had introduced a proposal regarding the voluntary contribution of the Government of Switzerland. He suggested that, as decided in the informal consultations, its consideration should be postponed to a more appropriate time.

4. It was so decided.

5. Mr. INOMATA (Japan) expressed the hope that the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the Conference would make the most effective and economical use of the appropriations with regard to staffing, he wondered if it was really necessary to establish two high-level posts when the requisite competence could be found in the relevant substantive bodies, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and the spirit of General Assembly resolution 41/213 could thus be respected.

6. General Assembly resolution 42/211 stipulated prudent use of the Contingency Fund so as not to exhaust it before the end of the period of use. The Assembly had, moreover, decided in resolution 41/213 that if additional expenditures were proposed that exceeded resources available within the Contingency Fund, they could only be included in the budget through redeployment of resources from low-priority areas or modifications of existing activities. Lascly, the Secretary-General was required to submit a consolidated statement of all programme budget implications and revised estimates considered at a given session of the General Assembly and,

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* Subsequently issued in document A/44/933.

(Mr. Inomata, Japan)

should the consolidated amount exceed the balance available in the Fund, the Secretary-General would make proposals for revising the amounts so that it would not exceed the available balance. That, in his view, was the only way for the Organization to address the question of additional expenditures and to improve the planning, programming and budgeting process.

7. Mrs. SHITAKHA (Kenya) said that she would like it to be recorded that, as regarded decision III and Assembly resolution 44/228, it was understood that any permanent secretariat on the environment would be set up after the Conference only at UNEP. Her delegation approved the decision to defer to a more appropriate time the consideration of the proposal by the representative of the Soviet Union.

8. Mr. LAOUARI (Algeria) said that he thought the debates during the consideration of the financial implications of the preparations for the Conference had illustrated the importance of questions relating to the environment and to development. However, it was an inescapable fact that the financial burden of the preparatory process might well compromise seriously the possibilities of financing other activities decided upon by the legislative bodies from the Contingency Fund. His delegation therefore favoured the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) that the situation should be closely monitored during the forty-fifth session of the Assembly. It joined the many appeals for making further savings and mobilizing voluntary contributions. Lastly, it recalled the need to apply strictly the principle of equitable geographic distribution in setting up the Conference secretariat as called for in Assembly resolution 44/228.

9. Mr. ETUKET (Uganda) concurred with the comments of the representatives of Japan, Kenya and Algeria, and expressed the hope that the report referred to in decision II would take account of all the comments made by delegations, particulary with regard to staffing, and of the ACABQ recommendations on the functional descriptions of posts, the number of high-level posts and the need to restrict the number of consultants and reduce travel expenditures. He too wished to emphasize how important it was to respect the principle of equitable geographic distribution in selecting the Conference secretariat.

10. Mr. GOMEZ (Controller) said that, as a result of the decisions just adopted, the preparations for the Conference in 1990 would have to be financed from the General Fund. He would be remiss in his duty as Controller if he did not caution the Committee that the situation with regard to 1990 contributions to the regular budget was anything but heartening. As of the current date, total collections amounted to $332.6 million, which meant that it was already necessary to draw on the reserves, including the Working Capital Fund. Total outstanding contributions, including arrears, amounted to $677.8 million. Only 26 countries were without arrears, 11 came under Article 19 of the Charter, and 77 had made no payment for the current year. The projections indicated a real possibility of cash depletion in the final quarter of 1990. Under such circumstances, he would have no choice but to take a strictly prudent, if not stringent, line in the administration of allotments for the remainder of the year. The Secretary-General intended in the

(Mr. Gomez)

next few days to send letters of reminder to the States which had not paid their contributions. The report on the status of contributions as at 31 March 1990 would be issued in mid-April.

11. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded its review of the programme budget implications of the draft decision in document A/44/48 on agenda item 82 (f) (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development).

The meeting rose at 7 p.m.